

moms and dads in Iraq want to be able to raise their children in a society where their children can have a bright future, just like the moms and dads in America do.

These leaders have said, "We want your help." And America has responded. And nations of the world have rallied to them as well. The NATO Alliance and the EU and the United Nations are all standing behind the newly liberated people of Afghanistan and Iraq. And these good people are taking on more of their own responsibility. Listen, they understand their future depends on their ability to deal with the thugs and criminals and foreign terrorists. And so we're helping them train to do their duty, to do their civic responsibility in a free society.

But what's important for those people is that they can count on America. We have promised to help deliver them from tyranny, to restore their sovereignty, and to set them on the path to democracy. And when America gives its word, America keeps its word.

There was a time not so long ago when America was a young democracy. When the Declaration was signed, not many in this world would have bet on the success of the American cause. We were a little group of colonies on the edge of a continent. Our small and hungry band of soldiers was against the army of a great empire. Many in that empire considered July the 4th, 1776, to be just another day on the calendar. Yet, America's Founders knew that something very important had happened that day, something new and hopeful in the course of human events.

They called the American experiment a "new order of the ages." The time has confirmed their belief. The Colonies became a country. The people of America crossed a continent, and the ideals that created America have crossed the globe.

This history we celebrate today is a testament to the power of freedom to lift up a whole nation. And we still believe, on America's 228th birthday, that freedom has the power to change the world.

May God bless you, and may God bless America. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:57 p.m. at the West Virginia State Capitol Grounds. In his remarks, he referred to Sam Hindman, former pub-

lisher, Charleston Daily Mail; Maj. Gen. Allen E. Tacket, adjutant general, West Virginia National Guard; Gen. Robert H. "Doc" Foglesong, commander, U.S. Air Forces in Europe, commander, Allied Air Forces Northern Europe, and air component commander, U.S. European Command; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Rev. Shawn R. Thornton, senior pastor, Bible Center Church; President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; and Prime Minister Ayad al-Alawi of the Iraqi Interim Government.

Memorandum on Delegation of Authority Under Section 517(a) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004

July 5, 2004

Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense

Subject: Delegation of Authority Under Section 517(a) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004

By the authority vested in me the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 301 of title 3, United States Code, I hereby delegate to you the authority vested in the President under section 517(a) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004 (Public Law 108-136).

The authority delegated by this memorandum may be redelegated in writing no lower than the Under Secretary of Defense level.

Any reference in this memorandum to the provision of any Act shall be deemed to include references to any hereafter-enacted provision of law that is the same or substantially the same as such provision.

You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., July 13, 2004]

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 6, and it will be published in the *Federal Register* on July 14.

**Remarks Following Discussions With
Prime Minister David Oddsson of
Iceland and an Exchange With
Reporters**

July 6, 2004

President Bush. It's my honor to welcome the Prime Minister of Iceland to the Oval Office.

Mr. Prime Minister, thank you for coming. I'll have an opening statement. He'll have an opening statement. We'll answer a couple of questions.

I remember my first NATO meeting, and I walked in, and the person who greeted me and made me feel most at home was my friend here. And I've never forgotten that. Iceland has been a steady friend of the United States of America, and they have been an important friend.

We had an interesting discussion on some important issues, and it was a frank discussion. And that's what you expect among friends. It was open and honest. And the Prime Minister is a person who cares deeply about the security of his country and the welfare of his people, and that's why he's been such an effective leader for the good people of Iceland.

Mr. Prime Minister, welcome.

Prime Minister Oddsson. Thank you so much, Mr. President. I'm very happy to be here, not least on the President's birthday. It's a privilege.

President Bush. Thank you for remembering.

Prime Minister Oddsson. Well, we discussed some things—I will make two points. You had just recently, a week ago, in a NATO meeting in Istanbul, a very good meeting, I think, not least because of the firm leadership of the President and his open manner, his easy-speaking manner that everybody understands when he speaks. And he changed the atmosphere inside NATO for the better. The past is behind us. People are united to a future. Secondly, we had the opportunity to discuss the defense issues in Iceland, which is very important to us. And the President is looking on that in a positive way. But of course, he has to see the issue from all sides. This was a fruitful discussion about the future. Thank you.

President Bush. Yes.

A couple of questions. Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

2004 Election

Q. Mr. President, the Republican National Committee says that John Edwards is disingenuous, inexperienced, and unaccomplished. I wonder, do you agree with that? Is that the tone that you want to set in talking about—

President Bush. Listen, I welcome Senator Edwards on the ticket. The Vice President called him early this morning to say—after the announcement was made—to say that he welcomes him to the race, and as do I. And I look forward to a good, spirited contest.

Have you got somebody from your press corps?

Prime Minister Oddsson. Okay. From Iceland somewhere?

Iceland-U.S. Defense Issues

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, did you reach an agreement on the defense treaty with Iceland?

Prime Minister Oddsson. That was never—the meeting—was to have an agreement. Now, today I had the opportunity to explain my view of the issue to the President, and he is looking into my position and the Iceland position, but he had an open mind.

President Bush. Yes. Let me comment on this, about—this is an issue related to the F-15s, for the American press. We've got four F-15 fighters stationed there. The Prime Minister pressed very hard for us to keep the fighters there. He was very eloquent, very determined that the United States keep the troops there. And I told him, I said I'm open-minded about the subject. I want to make sure I understand the full implications of the decision as to whether or not to leave them there. And we will gather more information. He is going to provide information about the basing there in Iceland and the requirements there. I will talk to the respective departments here, and I will make a measured judgment as to the finality of this issue.

I told the Prime Minister I'm—I appreciate our alliance. I appreciate his friendship.